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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ABUJA 000040

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/FO, AF/W, AF/RSA, DRL, INR/AA

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGER DELTA POST-AMNESTY PROCESS STALLED

REF: 09 ABUJA 02295

Classified By: Political Counselor James P. McAnulty
for reasons in sections 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

¶11. (C) The new Nigerian Government (GON) Amnesty Subcommittee on Niger Delta Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DRR) has met only once since its formation December 14. Committee members drafted a proposed rehabilitation plan December 22 that ex-militants then rejected January 10. United Nations Development Program (UNDP) partners and the UNDP country team leader continue to express frustration that the GON has ignored their offer to engage on the Niger Delta, while civil society groups and activists expressed frustration that the Niger Delta Technical Committee (NDTC) report, submitted over one year ago to President Yar'Adua, remained largely ignored although it provided a highly detailed and comprehensive proposal for addressing the underlying causes of militancy. A Bayelsa State official predicted that ex-militants would "return to the creeks" within six months due to GON inaction. He said the GON has ignored all attempts by Bayelsa State to coordinate rehabilitation efforts, and a disconnect existed between Amnesty Committee members and former militants on the meaning of rehabilitation. END SUMMARY.

AMNESTY REHABILITATION COMMITTEE SLOW TO START

¶12. (C) Presidential Amnesty Committee Spokesperson Timiebi Koripamo told PolMilOff January 12 that the new Amnesty Subcommittee on Niger Delta Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DRR) has met only once since its formation December 14. The meeting occurred at the Defense Ministry of Defense in Abuja on December 22, with the committee drafting a proposed rehabilitation plan that ex-militants later rejected January ¶10. The proposed rehabilitation plan focused on ex-militant basic skills training (e.g., shoe-making, barbering, and soap-making) and tuition grants to selected "educated" individuals.

EX-MILITANTS JOIN NEW AMNESTY SUBCOMMITTEE

¶13. (C) Koripamo gave PolMilOff on January 12 a copy of the meeting minutes and list of meeting participants, who besides herself included Defense Minister retired General Godwin

Abbe, Niger Delta Minister Ufot Ekaette, three militant representatives -- T.K. Ogoriba (former Ijaw Youth Council national president and close confidant of Government Ekpemupolo known better as "Tompolo"), Selekye Victor Ben (General Boyloaf's younger brother), and Kingsey Kuku (Ijaw Youth Council member and former Ondo State House Representative) -- Senior Special Assistant to the President Amina Az-Zubair, Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) Representative Dr. Shettima Abba, Military Coordinator on Amnesty Air Vice Marshal Lucky Ararile, Niger Delta Development Corporation Representative Chibuzor Ugwoha, National Employment Director-General Mallam Abubakar Mohammed, Nigeria Police Force Operations Director Inspector General John Ahmadu, Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF) Executive Secretary M. R. Darma, MOD Special Assistant I.P. K. Emefiele. Also invited, but absent, were Nigerian Defense Academy (NDA) Senior Special Assistant to the President Chief Timi Alaibe, National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP) Senior Special Assistant to the President Dr. Magnus L. Kpako, National Orientation Agency (NOA) Director General Alhaji Idi Farouk.

¶4. (U) According to the Constitution of the DRR Committee, the group's purpose is to monitor the full implementation of the Disarmament Process and mop up all outstanding illegal weapons in the hands of recalcitrant militants and criminals; monitor the security situation in the region and assist Security Agencies to restore normalcy; undertake inter- and intra-community mediation to resolve amicably all lingering disputes and misunderstandings; assist in reconciling former militants with their local communities to ensure their

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complete integration as full and bonafide citizens of such communities; monitor and advise on the conduct of skills training and employment generation for the engagement of ex-militants and non-militants youth in the Niger Delta region; and carry out all the necessary endeavors to promote conflict resolution, reconciliation, and peace building in the region. Koripamo said, so far, the committee has only drafted a DRR plan which discusses proposed course work for militants but does not contain an implementation plan. The Committee has not seen the UNDP-drafted Operations Plan given to General Abbe in October.

¶5. (U) The four other GON post-amnesty subcommittees involve Oil and Gas Asset Protection, Infrastructural Development, Environmental Clean-Up and Remediation, and Modalities of Host Communities in the Ownership of Petroleum Assets. Vice President Goodluck Jonathan inaugurated the committees in December, and SGF Mahmud Yayale Ahmed signed the constitutions for each December 14.

DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS LOSING HOPE

¶6. (C) Koripamo commented that the GON plan drafted at the December 22 meeting was not the same one that UNDP consultants presented to General Abbe in October. According to Koripamo, the Committee has not seen this plan nor the letter in which UNDP partners offered to engage the GON on the Niger Delta, which General Abbe received December 21 (reftel). This letter included a working paper on "Support for Stabilization, Recovery, and Development in the Niger Delta." UNDP Country Director Turhan Saleh told PolMilOff January 9 that the Amnesty Committee has not even acknowledged receipt of the letter, let alone requested UNDP's technical assistance. He said he did not foresee any request for help until after the GON resolved President Yar'Adua's health crisis. European Union Head of Operations Pierre Philippe reportedly told a Canadian diplomat January 11 that he expected never to hear from the GON. Nonetheless, Philippe and Turhan emphasized that the goal has always been for development partners to be seen as "doing something" --

not necessarily resolving the problem. Turhan hinted that the GON would likely never "sincerely" seek UNDP assistance on Niger Delta post-amnesty efforts.

EX-MILITANTS LOSING HOPE; WHY PLAN REJECTED

¶ 17. (C) Niger Delta ex-militants, including leaders Ateke Tom and Tompolo, met in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, January 10, to consider the December 22 GON rehabilitation plan, which subcommittee members Ogoriba and Kuku presented to the group. Koripamo told PolMilOff January 12 that ex-militants rejected it because they objected to the suggested training course content. Complaining that the training did not relate to job opportunities, Koripamo remarked that "the militants don't want to be barbers and soap-makers." Discontent also arose over the slow pace in implementation and problems in making timely stipend payments. That night, Bayelsa State Due Process and E-Government Director Dimieari Von Kemedi, who chairs Bayelsa State's post-amnesty program, confirmed to PolMilOff that the group had rejected the plan, specifically by objecting to the specified training. Ex-militants also criticized the slow pace of GON post-amnesty efforts. Qcriticized the slow pace of GON post-amnesty efforts.

ACTIVISTS LOSING HOPE; NDTC REPORT IGNORED

¶ 18. (C) Other activists from the region, including NDTC member Tony Uranta, noted with frustration that the comprehensive blue print provided by the NDTC to the President over one year ago for addressing the root causes of conflict in the Delta has remained largely ignored. (N.B: The NDTC Report analyzed previous recommendations and laid out a plan for resolving long-standing problems in the Niger Delta divided into stages. NDTC had consulted militant leaders and included their input in the report. END NOTE.)

BAYELSA LOSING HOPE; AMNESTY WILL FAIL BY AUGUST

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¶ 19. (C) Von Kemedi predicted that amnesty would fail no later than this August, one year after President Yar'Adua first launched his amnesty program. He believed ex-militants would slowly begin returning to the creeks and previous criminal activity over the next several months. The recent rise in kidnappings was one example he gave of the consequences of not dealing transparently and sincerely with the underlying problems in the Niger Delta and post-amnesty process. Von Kemedi stated that he has made repeated efforts to coordinate Bayelsa state's post-amnesty efforts with the federal government, without success. No one from the Amnesty Committee will even return his calls. He believes GON failure to establish an implementation working group, at the technical level, represents another cause for the slow and ineffective GON start. General Abbe must approve every decision by the committee, according to Von Kemedi, while, as Minister of Defense, he remained preoccupied with other duties.

COMMENT

¶ 10. (C) GON failure to draft an operations or implementation plan, adopt the NDTC blueprint, or reach out to UNDP for technical assistance mean that the GON will not likely start rehabilitation efforts for another three to six months. The three ex-militant "representatives" at the January 10 meeting consisted strictly of ethnic Ijaws with ties to militants in Delta and Bayelsa States only, particularly to Tom Polo and

Boyloaf. Whether the GON did not invite key militant groups from Rivers State, or they failed to attend, remains unknown.

Lack of clear indicators, transparency, or independent monitoring of the process will also continue to breed discontent among ex-militants, civil society, state government officials, and NGOs, leading to increased violence and criminal activity in the Niger Delta.

¶11. (U) Embassy coordinated this telegram with ConGen Lagos.

SANDERS